

in this as in other respects with the type. The costals are 17 (not including the ventral row) in the whole body-length, not 19 as stated in error in the original description (Bomb. N. H. Journal, Vol. XIX. p. 805).

F. WALL, MAJOR, I.M.S., C.M.Z.S.

ALMORA, 13th March 1911.

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No. XLII.—ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE SNAKE *DIPSADOMORPHUS NUCHALIS* (BEDDOME) IN BERHAMPUR ORISSA.

In the records of the Indian Museum (Vol. III, pp. 151, *et seq.*) I remarked upon certain forms of *Dipsadomorphus* hitherto included under the name *D. ceylonensis*, four of which combined certain characters, making it appear that each form deserved recognition as a distinct species.

One of these forms, *viz.*, *nuchalis* (Beddome) I showed by a series of 16 specimens combined the following characters:—(1) scales 21 (rarely 23) in midbody, (2) 234 to 251 ventrals, (3) 90 to 108 sub-caudals, (4) Habitat—Hills in Western India and Nepal.

I have recently had a specimen in complete accord with this type from Berhampore (Orissa), which is specially interesting, because it links up the previously known curiously distant habitats. The specimen has 21 scale rows in midbody, 244 ventrals, and 108 sub-caudals. The vertebral scales are nearly as broad as long. The colour is a darkish grey, and there are obscure blackish oblique bars costally.

It is still further interesting in tending to support my views, which Dr. Annandale attacked in the succeeding number of the Journal above referred to.

As far as I am aware, none of the forms I referred to have been reported from Hills on the Eastern side of India, so that, whether these forms will eventually be recognised as varieties of one species or species distinct from one another, it is interesting to know that one form at least inhabits the Eastern side of Peninsula India. I think it a safe assumption that the specimen I have just acquired is a wanderer from the adjacent Hills which are but 8 or 10 miles distant.

F. WALL, MAJOR, I.M.S., C.M.Z.S.

ALMORA, 6th April 1911.

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No. XLIII.—IS *LYCODON GAMMIEI* (BLANFORD) AN ABERRANT SPECIMEN OF *LYCODON FASCIATUS* (ANDERSON)?

I was much interested to see in the last Journal (p. 855) the snake *Lycodon fasciatus* recorded from exactly the same locality in the Eastern Himalayas, in which *Lycodon gammiei* was collected, especially as I have

for a long time thought the latter would prove to be an aberrant example of the former.

The type and only specimen of *gammiei* is in the Indian Museum, and when I examined it some years back, I remarked on the great similarity in colour and lepidosis between it and *fasciatus*, and was inclined to think the two would probably have to be united. I was deterred from voicing this opinion firstly, because *fasciatus* had never been recorded from the Eastern Himalayas, and secondly, on account of scale differences. Now that the first objection to my opinion has been removed, it is worth enumerating the scale differences noted.

(1) First there is the fact that there are in *gammiei* 19 scales in midbody whereas in *fasciatus* there are 17. (2) The ventrals and sub-caudals in *gammiei* are in excess of the ranges given by Mr. Boulenger (Cat. Vol. I, p. 358) for *fasciatus*. (3) The loreal in *gammiei* fails to touch the eye, but in *fasciatus* it usually does so.

To take the scale rows in *fasciatus*, they are 17 shortly behind the neck, and remain so to well behind the middle of the body, then reducing to 15. In *gammiei* they are 17 for about 6 headlengths behind the head, then become 19 by a division of the 3rd row above the ventrals, and remain 19 till behind the middle of the body where they reduce to 17 and subsequently to 15. Now it is no unusual thing to find individuals in many species that exhibit the same anomaly (as I believe this is); the scale rows for a variable length in the body exceeding the normal by two. I have seen this in more than one species of *Dipsadomorphus*, *Oligodon* and *Simotes* in *Silybura ocellata* *Ancistrodon himalayanus* and other snakes. The peculiarity of the scales in *gammiei* need not therefore deter one from considering it an aberrant *fasciatus*.

As regards ventrals and subcaudals, Mr. D'Abreu reports the counts in his specimen as 214+98, thus according well with those in the type of *gammiei*, which Blanford recorded as 214+101. (I however make them 222+100).

With reference to the third point, Mr. D'Abreu mentions that the loreal is pointed behind (he says anteriorly, but obviously means posteriorly), but does not reach the eye. This is the exact condition in the type of *gammiei*.

I examined the type of *gammiei* beside specimens of *fasciatus*, and in every detail except those referred to above, the two forms seemed to agree. The colouration is exactly as in *fasciatus*. I feel very confident now that *gammiei* is an aberrant example of *fasciatus*, and as it was described first, the species should in future be known as *gammiei*, Anderson's name *fasciatus* being suppressed.

F. WALL, MAJOR, I.M.S., C.M.Z.S.

ALMORA, 1st March 1911.

## No. XLIV.—DO SNAKES SWALLOW STONES ?

The other day, while examining the insides of a large *Tropidonotus piscator*, I found a solid piece of mortar, measuring about an inch by three-quarters and half an inch in thickness. It would appear that snakes like crocodiles and birds swallow stones to aid their digestion. I would like to know if other members have noticed similar incidents.

E. A. D'ABREU, F.Z.S.

NAGPUR, C. P., 27th August 1911.

No. XLV.—REMARKS ON THE GREATER, AND LESSER  
BLACK KRAITS (*BUNGARUS NIGER*,  
AND *B. LIVIDUS*).

Having just received two specimens of that uncommon and local Krait *B. lividus* from Mr. D. A. Jacob, I.F.S., from Jalpaiguri District, I think some remarks on this species and its near ally *B. niger* may be of interest. The lesser black Krait (*lividus*) was described originally from Assam by Dr. Cantor in 1839, but its validity as a species was doubted and Dr. Gunther in 1864 merely conceded to it the rank of a variety of our common Krait (*cœruleus*). Later, however, in 1890 Mr. Boulenger restored to it its lost dignity as a species, and I think most herpetologists will agree with his view.

Until last year it was confused with another very similar Krait which I described in this Journal\* as a distinct species under the name *B. niger*.

The two, though inhabiting the same restricted area, are easily known from one another by the development of the vertebral row and the ranges of their respective ventral and subcaudal shields.

In *lividus* the breadth of the vertebrae does not exceed their length, and in this it differs from all the other Kraits up to date described. Those shields appear longer than broad, but if accurate measurements are taken they will be found usually to be as broad as long. I believe it is a decidedly smaller snake than *niger*. It is poorly represented in our Museums, there being but four in the British Museum; none in either the Indian Museum nor our Society's Collection.

Both snakes are uniformly black dorsally, with a greyish or bluish sheen in certain lights. In the young of both there is no præocular white spot, nor blotches of white on the occiput as is usual, if not always the case, in the common Krait (*cœruleus*). The belly is alike in both being white for a variable length in front, later becoming mottled with dark plumbeous especially in the bases of the ventral and subcaudal shields.

I have now examined 12 specimens of *lividus*, and the details of these are shown in tabular form for easy reference, and comparison with 19 specimens of *niger* I have examined.

\* Vol. XIX, p. 838.